



Josh.Rupprecht@chargers.nfl.com  
Jamaal.LaFrance@chargers.nfl.com

Skip.Powers@chargers.nfl.com  
Brock.Anderson@chargers.nfl.com

Jennifer.Rojas@chargers.nfl.com  
Lauren.Meyer@chargers.nfl.com

## WEEK 2 — PODIUM AVAILABILITY

Thursday, September 12, 2019 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

### LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KEN WHISENHUNT

#### **On replacing TE Hunter Henry:**

“Well, [TE Virgil] Virg [Green] stepped up [last year]. We expect Virg to step up and [TE Sean] Culkin had a really good camp. Both of those guys will contribute plus we have a number of receivers — having [WR] Dontrelle [Inman] back — we can kind of mix things around. Quite frankly, having [RB Justin] JJ [Jackson] and [RB] Austin [Ekeler] also helps just because of their versatility. We’ll miss Hunter, but we expect some guys to step up.”

#### **On WR Dontrelle Inman:**

“It’s been great. First of all, he played really well last year. You could see that on tape. He played well for us when I was last with [the team], which was in 2016. You have a player that you know certain routes and what the expectation is with how he’s going to run them and putting them in those situations. Plus, he’s very familiar with the offense. One of the things that we do is that we move guys all around. It’s easy for him to do that and transition. It’s been great to have him back.”

#### **On the Detroit defense:**

“It was kind of hard to watch — not from a standpoint of watching football. It was hard to watch because there’s really not a lot there that translates to what we do and how we go about it with the approach from the offense. You watch a lot of tape from last year, they’re a physical defense. They’re aggressive. They’re not afraid to play man-coverage and try to put pressure on you. I think the big thing for us is going to be up front and our guys doing a good job because they have some big guys inside — [Lions DT Damon] Snacks [Harrison Sr.] and [Lions DT A’Shawn] Robinson, the kid from Alabama. They’re good players. They have a good corps of linebackers that are all kind of the same. They’re big, physical guys that can run pretty good. [Lions CB Darius] Slay does a nice job as a corner. He’s a really good cover guy. They’re a well-coached team, you can see that. We’re going to have to be good with our technique and fundamentals going in there just because of how they play their schemes.”

#### **On similarities between this defense and New England’s:**

“You know, I think how similar was Indianapolis’ offense to our offense — on the surface, there are similarities. Probably, if you break it down, there are differences. I think it’s a little bit that way to characterize it with their defense. You can see similarities, but I think a lot of it is just dependent on your players and how long they’ve been in your system. I think [Lions Head] Coach [Matt] Patricia does a great job with those guys. I have a lot of respect for him just over the years from the way he has coordinated the defense in New England and how those guys have played. The guys in New England have been there for a number of years. Just like anything else, they do things probably a little bit different because they’ve been together a little bit longer, just like anything else. There are elements of it, but they do their own thing.”

#### **On the running backs:**

“I thought we had a pretty good mix as far as how we had them substituted. [Justin] JJ [Jackson] got to play some. JJ probably could have played a little bit more, but the big thing is that I think Austin [Ekeler] got just about the right amount. If he would have gotten five, six, seven less plays, that would have been okay, too. Just the way that it worked out, we felt good about it. He did a really good job, Austin did, and so did JJ. I think that’s a hard thing to do for those guys, but they’re handling that situation really well. It’s exciting to see them make some plays.”



**On WR Mike Williams:**

“We have other guys that we can put in there and go. That’s what we’ve been doing, that’s what we expect to do. Mike is a good player. We certainly hope Mike goes. Just out there on the field a while ago, he was looking better. Hopefully, that will be really good, but we’ll see. We will know more as the week progresses. Like I said when we talked about Dontrelle [Inman] — and certainly [WR] Travis [Benjamin]. I’ll tell you what, Travis has had a really good year so far. He has done some really good things. Those things help.”

**On FB Derek Watt:**

“He has done a good job. I think being fully healthy this year has been a little bit of a change for him. We’ve always liked him and he’s done a good job, but he played really well in the game last week. He did a nice job from the protection, from blocking — some of the things that we asked him to do — also, obviously, the carries on third down were good. It’s hard in that role because there are so many snaps that a regular full back gets in the league anymore, so you have to evaluate him on some of the other things that he does — special teams is another area where he has to contribute. The thing that I really like about Watt is that there was one game against Denver where he was actually our third down back because he knows the protections. Every time he’s gotten a swing pass or a short pass, he’s broken it and made some plays with them. When it’s time for him to step up, he does a nice job. He played well last week.”

**On the play where QB Tyrod Taylor was on the field:**

“I could tell you, but then I’d be giving away probably the secrets of what we were thinking about. I would just have to say that [QB] Philip [Rivers] missed him because he was throwing it to him. He just missed him. Tyrod was going to break five tackles and score, then we were all going to be going crazy. That didn’t happen because Philip didn’t make a good throw.

“I think that, as a coach, when you’re looking at an opponent and you’re looking at all the snaps, you’re comfortable with, ‘Okay, I understand what they’re doing, what they’re attacking or plan is.’ Then, all of the sudden, you put an extra quarterback in there and you go, ‘Crap. Okay, now I have to prepare for that,’ or, ‘What about if he does this?’ It’s one of those things where we have some things that he can do. He’s versatile and if it forces a defense to have to prepare for some other things just in case, then maybe that helps us in another area. I don’t want to make the mistake — he’s a legitimate player. We’ve got some things with Tyrod that he can do in a role that I think could help us. Those things, they could come up this week or may not, but at some point, it will. That was one of the plays that we felt like would be good for us. There was a chance there. We didn’t finish a block, so Philip didn’t have enough time. It wasn’t going to Tyrod, but he was the check down. I just think that there’s value in having some plays like that if you have a player like Tyrod that can do some things just because it makes the defense prepare a little bit more.

“I don’t know if they’re going to prepare for one play. If [Rivers] had thrown it and Tyrod had caught it, then I would have said, ‘Yeah, it was successful.’ I can’t sit here and say it was successful. I was just saying the philosophy behind it. We’ve done plays in the past. Last year, we ran a couple. [WR] Keenan [Allen] had one or two throws and we had speed-options. Those didn’t work out too well. In my experience in the NFL, we’ve had a couple of those plays where they’ve actually turned into big plays, especially the reverse-pass in the Super Bowl was one of those that was big. Those kinds of things are ones that you have to be committed to doing because you can have big gains from them, but you can also have a play like the other day where they say, ‘What in the hell were you thinking on that play?’ It’s that kind of thing.”

**On T Trent Scott and T Sam Tevi:**

“Well, I think anytime you have four sacks and probably a lot of those were credited to Trent, you can’t say that they did great. They’re learning and they’re getting better. I think Sam did a pretty job in that game. Trent, I think, is a young player where there were some situations that came up where it’s a technique thing and understanding it. Let’s face it, this guy hasn’t played a lot at this level. He came in as a free agent last year. He started a game for us. He got a lot of reps in training camp, but he did some really good things, too. When you come out of a game like that, you could say probably with the exception of five or six plays, Trent played pretty well. When you give up a sack, especially a couple of sacks, it’s hard to say that because people say, ‘Oh, he played awful because he gave up the sacks.’ There were a lot of good things that Trent did in that game. We understand that Trent is a young player. He’s a talented player. I think he’ll continue to get better. We have to keep working with him.”

**On the offensive line’s run-blocking ability:**

“That’s not a question for me to answer because a lot of people have opinions about that. They put a criteria on it. I don’t understand the evaluation of that criteria or how they come to that. I think our guys work really well together. They do a nice job of communicating and how things are done, how we’ve blocked. It’s hard to argue with the success that we’ve had running the football over the last however many games. Hopefully, that can continue.”



**On having confidence in the next man up:**

"I hate to keep banging this drum, but Austin [Ekeler] and [Justin] JJ [Jackson] are kind of a testimony to that with what they did last year with [RB] Melvin [Gordon III] was out and people were like, 'What are you guys going to do? You don't have a back.' Even [RB] Detrez [Newsome] stepped up last year when Austin was a little banged up. I think that you just have to have guys that step in and play. I'll give you another great example was in the Kansas City game that we won. That last drive, Keenan [Allen] was banged up and was out. Travis [Benjamin] actually went in the game and was playing in the slot. It was fourth-and-seven and he made a tremendous catch for a first down, which ended up being the drive that we took the lead on. Travis hadn't played in that spot, but he had to get in there and play it. If you have a bunch of guys that believe in what they're doing and they're smart guys, then you have a chance. It's not like you have 85 of them like they do in college, or whatever number it is. We feel like our guys work at it. Hopefully, when they get their chance, they'll have success."

**On P Ty Long:**

"It was pretty amazing. It all came about quickly. You watched him a little bit. When you're in training camp and you have a lot things going on from an offensive perspective, you see the special teams, but you're not necessarily paying as much attention to it. I saw him kick one day and I was like, 'Wait a minute, isn't that our punter?' He did a nice job. He did a really good job punting, but to be able to handle all of those duties — let's give Tyrod [Taylor] a little bit of credit, too. That was amazing what he did. That all fits towards the team believing in each other. It was great to see somebody else step up and be successful in the job when they needed to. It was a great day. Once again, I'm talking about [Special Teams Coordinator/Assistant Head] Coach [George] Stewart's area, but I certainly admired the way Ty played and how they handled that."

**On facing Lions DE Trey Flowers:**

"They have a couple of good rushers over there. Trey is one of them. This sounds dumb or is coach-speak, but, shoot, every week they have somebody. That's the way it is in this league. Trent [Scott] just has to keep working. He feels good about it. I understand it's not easy, but he really wants to be a good player. He really works at it the right way. Hopefully, he'll continue to work at and we'll do some things to help him out. Hopefully, it'll continue to get better."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR GUS BRADLEY****Opening statement:**

"Just to go back to last week, obviously, we're excited that we won the game. As a defense, we didn't feel like we played a full, 60-minute game up to our standard. I think that's kind of the feeling in the locker room. It can be a good thing, too, because I know that yesterday's practice was a really focused practice. It's probably one of our better practices that we've had. There were some new guys playing together for the first time, but still, there are no excuses for some of the things that took place, especially towards the end of the game. I think everybody understands that's not our standard and what our standard is. We're back to work. We have a great challenge this week. It's another good team, offensively. They had over 400 yards last week. They have a good quarterback, a really good receiving corps, running backs and offensive line. It's another big challenge."

**On S Adrian Phillips:**

"He did a good job. Now, we didn't move him around [as much] and did some different things. Again, some things we're experimenting to kind of find out. We did some different things, defensively positioning guys to see what's best for us to hopefully come up with a personality and say, 'This is who we are on defense.' I thought he handled it pretty well."

**On CB Brandon Facyson:**

"That's a tough deal to be ready. He was thinking he was the L-2 on special teams. He was really into that. You always have to be ready, but to go in that early. I think we're excited to see when he has a week of preparation while getting the majority of the reps while going into the game where he understands what's asked of him. We have a lot of faith in him."

**On LB Kyzir White:**

"I think that some of the traits that we saw in training camp — a strong tackler, can run pretty well — those things showed up. It's a little bit new to him, the position, because now he's playing four-and-a-half yards from the line of scrimmage, so some of his keys and things like that — but as the game went on, I thought he played better and better."

"We had no issues as far as [organizing the defense]. Now, some of that we put on [Adrian] AP [Phillips], too."



**On Lions TE T.J. Hockenson:**

“Well, he jumps out. Obviously, in the game against Arizona. He’s very athletic, can catch all of the balls that we saw in preseason and the regular season. We knew when he was coming out how talented he was when just talking to some of our offensive coaches. Then, to see him perform like he did, we have to have really good awareness where he is on the field. He’s that caliber.”

**On defending Hockenson:**

“It’ll be different. There will be some different things. I think it’s more, just with our defense, building awareness to where he is and his location.”

**On the run defense:**

“We talk in terms of just trusting your teammates. Hey, if I’m a B-gap defender, you’ll take care of the B-gap. If you’re an A-gap, you take care of the A-gap. At times, we had guys — because they did have some success running the ball — trying to do too much. That’s not how you fix it. How you fix it is to go back and just make sure you do your responsibility. I think it’s that trust that is built. Now, a couple of them on the long runs, we had some guys get out of their gaps. We had a situation where they ran a stretch. Two guys thought it was a boot, they fell back and it hit us. That part of it is just understanding the scheme and getting reps at it. For the most part, it’s a little bit of overcompensating for others. That’s what we talked about this week, was building trust. Trust your teammates to take care of their responsibilities and you take care of yours.”

**On DB Desmond King II:**

“When Des first got here, his mentality — he is so competitive and so aggressive in nature. That’s what makes him so special. He was a little bit hard-headed I would say. To put it lightly. Hopefully, he agrees with me. I haven’t talked to him about this, but he was always good. Always wanted to compete and be his best. I’ve just seen Des over the past couple of years now, he has really wised up. He’s matured. A true professional how he goes about it. It’s very important to him and he’s a great teammate. In the couple of years, it’s been wonderful to be around him and experience the transition that has taken place with him.”

**On S Jaylen Watkins:**

“Jaylen has multiple roles for us. He’s kind of our new [Adrian] AP [Phillips]. He might play some different things that we’re asking him to do. He can play corner, he can play nickel, he can play strong, he can play free. We needed that with some of the depth things that we have. That’s why he was so important to us. He had done some good things in training camp when he was playing. We’re trying to get him on the field some. He gives us that backup at all of those positions in case of an emergency.”

**On DT Jerry Tillery:**

“I think Jerry Tillery will be a work-in-progress. I thought he showed flashes of doing some good things and then some of inexperience. That’s what happens with our guys. It’s like what happened with [S Derwin] DJ [James Jr.] last year. It was like, ‘Okay, let’s stay with him and let him grow.’ The more and more reps, the more he plays, he’ll develop to be a pretty good player for us. That’s what I think we’re seeing with Tillery. He just needs more experience playing. We have no issues putting him in there and letting him play. I think he’s a guy that will bring some good things to the defense.”

**On the pass rush:**

“The good thing with our guys is that they’re very flexible. Sometimes, you have [defensive] ends that are like, ‘I can only rush from the left.’ Our guys give us the flexibility that we can look for matchups and move them around. We can put [DE] Joey [Bosa] and [DE] Melvin [Ingram III] together. We can separate them. We can put them over a guard. I think you’ll see that throughout the year. Their flexibility as far as being adaptive to either side allows us, per game, to go into it with a certain game plan.”

**On building trust among players:**

“I think that the style of defense that we play, we try to keep it simple for us, yet confusing for the offense. That simplicity for us allows guys to come in case of injuries or in case of playing youth — that they can come in, step in and know what’s asked of them so that trust level, I think, should come around fast. If [LB] Drue Tranquill stepped in there, it should be the same amount of trust. That’s what we’re hoping for. That’s what we’re striving for. I see that happening. It just has to happen consistently. You can’t take a play and not be consistent on one thing because a big run can occur.”



**On LB Thomas Davis Sr.:**

“He’s another guy that’s going through a little bit of a transition. In other systems, he’s been more of a downhill linebacker. That’s what he does. He plays with great speed and understanding of the game. His wisdom and his leadership are very welcome to this team, but he is still learning some of the things. Again, as the game went on, you saw him. This week, he’s been extremely focused. He’s had a really good week. I think that, again, every game we just need to make sure that we improve and get to the point where we reach our standard and then raise the bar from that. We’re just not there yet.”

**On playing Davis a lot of snaps:**

“Yes, but like always if guys show that they can perform well in practice and that trust part is there, we try to find roles for guys. It’s important to keep guys fresh, too.”

**On Davis’ role:**

“At times, he played on the outside at Carolina. Now, he’s playing on the inside for us. He played on the inside there, too, for many years. We’re asking him to do a few different things according to his strengths. Just to lock in, get the understanding of the defense. What we call a weak hook might not have been what they call the weak hook in Carolina and exactly what is asked of a weak hook, a strong hook or a carry player. I think those things are coming along in the heat of the moment. He’s going to be a really good player for us. He is a good player for us, but I think as he gets even more opportunities to play in this system, I think his physical qualities will really shine.”

**On the defensive motivation on Sunday:**

“I can’t speak for them, but I know our defense is [salty]. You know you won, so you want to say, ‘Isn’t that ultimately what we’re after?’ There is still a feeling of that we weren’t at our best. That’s a heavy feeling with our defensive guys right now. I think, going into it, if you can learn that part of it with a win, that’s even better — that saltiness from what took place. That’s not who we are. We have to get this right. Let’s get our focus, our attention even [higher]. In some ways, it could be a good thing, especially if you can win and perform like that. I think our guys will be really focused this week.”

**On S Derwin James Jr.:**

“He’s great. He broke down the defense today before we came in. We want to make sure that he’s very engaged. He’s in the meetings and stays up on things. He’s done a good job of that. It’s tough for him to stay on the sidelines and watch. He said that was one of the toughest things that he had to go through. That part, but he’s very engaged. I know the team appreciates him being around.”

**On a third-and-long against Indianapolis that allowed 17 yards:**

“I would say there was some miscommunication that took place, but no, it was not executed properly. There was some miscommunication as far as personnel on the field. You can’t have that on a third-and-20 and give up 18 yards. You get them in that down and distance, the defense that was called — that was not the intent. I think everybody would agree with that. I have to do a better job communicating who’s in the game. Then, once in the game, we have to recognize it and execute. We just didn’t do that.”

